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THE RISING OF THE BRASS MEN.

It was nine o'clock, one sultry evening early in the present year, and had therefore been dark some two and a half hours, as a solitary white man patrolled the clearing surrounding the factory at the mouth of the Nun River. To the rear and on both sides lay the great African forest, in most places a horrible quagmire of putrid mud and slime, out of which, supported on their high arched roots, and with branches growing down and again taking root in the mire, rose the mangrove trees. In other parts where the ground lay firmer grew lofty cotton-woods, with an almost impenetrable mass of thorny bushes and creepers plaited round their bases. On the remaining side flowed the Nun River, the principal of the Niger's manifold mouths, here about a mile wide, and dividing the two dense forests. On either bank for hundreds of miles stretched the mangrove swamps, the trees growing out of fathomless mud, intersected by muddy creeks winding like tunnels under the interlacing branches.

Over river and forest hung a white mist, heavy with the smell of rotting leaves and exhalations of the swamps, which no white man may breathe uninjured, and which to many brings ruined constitutions or swift death from malarial fever. After the fierce heat of the day, the white man shivered a little as the clammy mist soaked through his clothing, and lighted a cigar as some feeble attempt to counteract the probable dose of fever. Listening sharply, he passed along the strip of fetid mud which formed the river bank, and found the black sentinels at their posts half hidden by the mist and the dripping bushes. Then rapidly returning, he climbed the stone staircase rising to the factory, which, as is necessary along this coast, was supported some twenty feet from the ground, to raise it a little above the worst of the miasma (for here, if a white man sleep on the ground-level, he shall surely die), and entered the brightly lighted room. At

the table sat two men, another Englishman and a young French officer, both haggard and with the fever-smitten look of this blighted land; but while the Englishman appeared anxious and ill at ease, his companion, with the *insouciance* of his nation, sat smiling and careless. They had sufficient to justify any anxiety; for weeks past the Nimbi negroes, incensed at the attempt of the British Company to charge them a duty on their trade, had threatened to come down and kill the white men and burn the factory; but by the self-sufficiency and contempt of every native nation, which England has so often dearly paid for, the warning had been slighted until now, when most of the black troops were away, and only some few remained with three Europeans, the blow was to fall.

All day strange canoes had been seen coming down the river to disappear among the mangrove swamps, and the few river men who worked among the Krooboyes round the factory, by that singular means which all natives have of transmitting news faster than it can be carried by any mail-canoe or steam-launch, were whispering that a fleet of large canoes and at least nine hundred men from the Brass River, another deltaic arm of the Niger, would that night wipe out every man around the factory and utterly destroy it. In front of the factory a small redoubt was hastily made out of salt-bags, and a machine gun mounted in it; the few black troops were supplied with as much ball cartridge as they could carry; and when night fell with the suddenness of the tropics, all waited with anxious hearts for what might befall. Besides the three Europeans, there were some two to three hundred coloured hands around the factory, clerks from Sierra Leone and Lagos, and the ever-cheerful and generally to be depended on Kroo labourers. These were, however, in the same peril as the whites, as one negro tribe hates another with a deadly hatred; and the river men, who form powerful nations and possess cities of forty thousand

inhabitants, are a cruel and vindictive race, and allow no interlopers in their dominions. The only one at ease among them was the black printer, who had been to the Brass city, where he had friends and relations, and where he assured his envious listeners he would be treated as an honoured guest.

Hour after hour passed slowly, the fireflies flashed and sparkled in the wet grass, and no sound was to be heard except the rapid rush of the ebb-tide and the croaking of frogs in the swamps. The moon rose and the mist grew lighter, showing on the one side patches of the gleaming river, and on the other the dark wall of the forest. One by one the natives, with the happy carelessness of the negro, dropped off to sleep; but above, the three Europeans kept close watch on the veranda, taking turn about to see that the outlying sentries were awake at their posts. So the night crept on until in his gay manner the Frenchman began to abuse the Brass men for keeping them waiting. 'Don't be impatient, Daddy,' his companion said; 'if they come, the brutes will be here an hour after midnight.' Then as the time was drawing near, the lamp in the room was turned low, spare rifles taken from the rack and laid on the table, besides a supply of opened cartridge packets, and then with rifle in hand the three sat quietly in the shadow on the veranda.

'Listen,' said the doctor; and up the river they could plainly hear the 'chunk, chunk' of paddles. In another moment there was a loud report from a good-sized gun in the bows of a canoe, and then with howls and shouts the Brass men rushed upon the factory from the bush and river simultaneously. With their sharply filed matchets the factory Krooboyas made as brave a stand as they could, but they were outnumbered six to one, and the Brass men were armed with guns. Ball or shot they rarely use, but prefer a handful of broken cast-iron potleg, which at close quarters makes a ghastly wound. In a few minutes the black labourers were mostly killed, and the remnant broke and fled for the salt shed. Here they were met by another company of their enemies, and were taken between the two. It was an indiscriminate slaughter. Many were unarmed, and those who had weapons had no chance against numbers. After a few minutes there was not a Krooboy left standing, excepting those who saved their lives by a timely flight into the bush.

Then the fiendishness of the river men found an outlet. In front of the salt shed grew a large tree. On either side of the trunk stood a huge negro with a matchet. His companions, dragging such as were not killed outright to their feet, hurled them against the tree; and as they did so, the two matchets came down, shearing through skull or neck, and the victim fell a mangled corpse at the roots of the tree. One after another were so killed, many with the negro's apparent carelessness of death, and the others with fearful shrieks. When all were killed, and only a pool of blood and a ghastly heap lay at the foot of the tree, a rush was made for the clerks' quarters; and in spite of a feeble revolver fire, an entrance was made, several were killed on the spot, and

the rest tied hand and foot and hurled through the windows.

Then the united body moved towards the Europeans' house, a grotesque procession, most of them dripping with blood from their own or their victims' wounds, all tall, strongly made men, with their hair knitted up into many fantastic plaits, many armed with guns, some with matchets, and some with the horrible African spears with barbed edges and sharp hooks. As they came, the two or three black soldiers left pointed and fired the Nordenfolt gun from the salt-bag redoubt. After the flash of the gun and a yell which told of the result, the whole force with a wild rush swept up to the house and over the redoubt. Bravely standing to their post, the two black soldiers struggled with the gun; but the discharge had jammed the breech-block, and it was useless.

Stabbed and horribly mutilated, they fell at their post, while the savage mob swept round to the stone stairs leading to the veranda. Up the first two or three steps they swept, a disordered crowd, firing their long guns indiscriminately wherever the crush would allow them to move an arm. Then the three white men appeared at the head of the stairway standing in the shadow, while the blacks below were in the bright moonlight. They were not soldiers taught to shoot with a wooden, mechanical movement, but sportsmen who knew their weapon, balance, and pull off; and as the repeating-rifles flashed and flashed, the lower steps became a shambles, savage after savage fell, blocking the way for his followers, until they turned tail and bolted for cover. Then the defenders dropped back against the wall and hurriedly refilled their magazines. In a few moments the attack began again, this time the Brass men coming on in a thinner body. Still, not one gained more than a few steps before he fell back on the writhing heap below. It was too hot to last; no one could stand against the repeating-rifle in such hands, and again the crowd broke and fled.

This time a few only remained in front of the factory, firing as fast as they could reload their guns at the veranda, where they supposed the garrison to lie. The rest went round to the rear of the building and underneath, and commenced to shoot through the wooden floors from below and through the building from side to side; while others, dragging up a good-sized cast-iron gun from one of the war canoes, fired large shot and handfuls of stones through floor and walls, while the little garrison lay down in the deepest shadow they could find. For a long time the fusillade continued steadily, while the white men, unable to reply, crouched anxiously in their shelter. Then it ceased, except a few dropping shots, and the cries and groans from the compound, mixed with wild howls of delight, told that the Brass men were killing their prisoners and looting the stores.

Slowly the time passed, until after the usual brief African dawn the sun rose, and the three Europeans looking round, saw the ghastly heap at the foot of the stairway, where still some one moved an arm from time to time or moaned faintly; all around them the wooden sides of the houses were torn and riddled with

shot. The worst was that, in the clear light, they could not stand at the stairhead, but had to retreat into the room facing it. By-and-by the blacks again gathered in front of the house and moved towards the stairs; but after a few moments' quick firing, during which a number of them fell, they retired, leaving the Europeans still unhurt, but with less than a dozen cartridges left. It was then suggested that three should be put on one side, so that at the last they should not fall into the hands of their enemies alive. Here the Frenchman interposed, saying that in any case they could only die, and that it were better to fire every single shot, and no one knew what might happen at the very latest moment.

So they stood with parched mouths and throats, and smoke-grimed faces, waiting the end, till the boom of a gun rang out, followed by the deep tone of a steam-whistle and the R.M.S. *Bathurst* slowly steamed round the point close inshore. In a few moments the negroes were in full flight. Away they went, dragging with them bales and boxes, wounded comrades and prisoners; and ten minutes after the arrival of the steamer, a fleet of large canoes in full flight were all that remained, and the plucky defence of the factory came to an end.

The poor prisoners, however, fared worse. They were carried away two days' journey through the rivers and creeks, nailed to the bottom of the canoes through hands, feet, and arms; and on reaching the town of Nimbi, were killed and eaten: the printer, in spite of his reliance on his friends there, suffering the same fate, after untold agony from heat and thirst, lying for two days in the fierce glare of the African sun, with the rusty nails eating into his flesh.

The last scene of the tragedy was enacted when Her Majesty's gunboats went up the river and burned the town.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

CHAPTER XXXIII.—IN THE LION'S MOUTH.

'No, Mr Wynnan, certainly not.—By the way, you have assured me that you were the late Mr Dalton's trusted assistant, and helped him in this invention.'

'I may claim, sir, to having been the inventor,' 'Very well, then,' said the gentleman addressed, as he sat back in his chair in the well-furnished, sombre room in one of the Government buildings; 'we will take it that you are the inventor.'

'May I ask whom I am addressing?' said Wynnan.

'Of course. I am the Under-secretary, and the communications made to your firm have—of course, inspired by my chief—come from me, in whose hands the settlement of this business has been placed. I have endeavoured to show you, Mr Wynnan, that my department is inspired by no inimical feeling; there is no desire for persecution, but we have a duty to perform.'

'Naturally, sir.'

'After certain communications with your late principal, it was decided that it was the duty of the Government to take up the invention offered to them, and they did so in a frank spirit, paying handsomely with the money for whose proper disbursement they are answerable to the State. Of course, as soon as we find that we have been—there I must use a strong term—swindled, we are bound to act. You grant that?'

'Of course, sir.'

'You grant, then,' said the Under-secretary with a smile, 'that we have been—swindled?'

'Certainly.'

'And that it is our duty to proceed against the firm in some form or other, for, when we enter into a matter like this, we become commercial, and must act accordingly. If your firm had bought an engine of another firm, and it did not prove to be what was represented when you parted with your money, I presume that you would commence an action against the people who had defrauded you?'

'Certainly, sir,' said Wynnan firmly. 'I do not join issue with you in the matter. I merely come here and place the question before you as it stands. It is a repetition, perhaps, of a great deal that I said to you at my last interview.'

'Pray go on, Mr Wynnan. We have no wish to be unjust. You will find us amenable.'

'Then, sir, let me assure you that my late principal, Mr Dalton, was a man of the most sterling honesty of character.'

'So we were informed.'

'Everything he promised would have been done; but either before or subsequent to his death, the idea of the invention was stolen, and sold to this foreign Government.'

'By whom?'

Wynnan was silent.

'Give me the names of the party or parties.'

'I cannot, sir. Of course I have my suspicions, but I cannot make the charge upon so weak a basis.'

'Give me the name, and our legal advisers shall settle whether they will investigate the matter, and bring it home.'

'No, sir,' said Wynnan firmly. 'I cannot expose a man who may be innocent, to the trouble that this proceeding would entail.'

'Very well, Mr Wynnan; then perhaps it would be better for our interview to come to a close.'

'No, sir,' said the engineer sturdily; 'hear me out, if you please. That invention was like the breath of life to me for years. I worked at it as hard as man could work. Again and again I thought I had achieved success, but always there was some little thing to necessitate a reconstruction.'

'I suppose so,' said the Under-secretary, smiling. 'Mechanism is a troublesome thing—even the construction of a cabinet. Well, Mr Wynnan?'

'At last, sir, I was able to show Mr Dalton that the final difficulty had been surmounted.'

'And we bought every right in the ingenious idea, and it has proved worthless.'

'How, sir?' said Wynnan warmly.

'How? My good sir, it is no longer a secret.'

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The idea has been sold to a foreign Government, and we have no guarantee that the new buyers may not sell it to a dozen more powers. It was the fact of its being unique that made it worth our while to buy.

'It is still unique, sir.'

'Ah, you said something of this kind the last time you were here. Prove your words.'

'Easily enough, sir. Metaphorically, that invention turns upon one point or pin. If that pin is absent, the whole thing falls to pieces.'

'Carry out your metaphor, sir. What is that point or pin—money?'

'No, sir: my mind. I tell you plainly and simply, that the purchase made by that foreign Government is absolutely worthless unless they purchase me as well.'

'And our purchase would have been absolutely worthless unless we purchased you,' said the Under-secretary, with a slight curl of the lip.

'Absolutely, sir.'

'Ah, then now we understand each other, Mr Wynyan. I am glad you have spoken out. Continue, sir. What is your price?'

Wynyan leaped to his feet, and his face flushed up.

'What do you take me for, sir?' he cried.

'Pray be calm, Mr Wynyan,' said the Under-secretary quietly. 'I take you for a business man; that is all.'

'A poor one, I am afraid, sir. You misunderstand me quite.'

'Then what do you mean?'

'This, sir. I would give everything to carry out Mr Dalton's invention to perfection, so that his bargain might be all that he wished.'

'But you ask some payment for this, sir?'

'Payment!' cried Wynyan scornfully. 'Would it not be payment enough for me to be able to prove that my detractors are obliged to humble themselves before me? To prove that I was slandered when I was accused of this base theft—to show that my dear old friend was an honourable gentleman—that I, whom he trusted, was worthy of that trust. Sir, I beg, I implore of you to stop all investigation, to let me go and finish the work, and prove to you that what I say—is correct.'

'That you are one with some personal end to serve, an enthusiast, or an honest man.'

'Put it in that way, if you like, sir,' said Wynyan coldly; 'will you trust me?'

'I am only a public servant, Mr Wynyan, bound to report all this to my chief and a committee. I must tell you, too, that this is not a private matter: Governments cannot afford to have bowels of compassion.'

'But it is for the public a national benefit.'

'Perhaps! But before we go further, Mr Wynyan, let me ask you a question. You have given me some reasons why you wish to work out this business; but to my mind they are insufficient. You have some far stronger motive than this moral revenge upon your enemies, whoever they may be. Come, sir, confess.'

Wynyan darted an indignant look at the speaker, as he once more rose.

'I have done all I can, sir,' he said. 'Once more I tell you that the sale is valueless, as time will prove. You will not trust me?'

'Answer my question, Mr Wynyan. You have a stronger motive than any that I have heard?'

'Yes,' said Wynyan, 'I have.'

The Under-secretary touched a bell to indicate that the interview was at an end, but Wynyan stood looking at him interrogatively.

'I can say no more, Mr Wynyan,' was the answer to his mute question. 'Everything which has passed will be laid before my chief. As soon as possible you shall hear the result.'

OUR BUTTER SUPPLY.

THE boast of Australian shippers of butter, that in a few years they would not only capture a large portion of our trade in that indispensable commodity, but drive Denmark out of the field, has not been as yet fulfilled. But that the advent of our colonial cousins on the scene has effected a revolution in the trade cannot be disputed; while the manufacturers of substitutes have strong reason to regret the day when the perfection of refrigerator accommodation on the steamers plying from the South Pacific rendered it possible for butter to be landed here from the Antipodes practically as fresh as when it left the creameries on the other side. The table given below will show how the old world and the new compete for our custom in this respect, and it will be gathered therefrom that Australasia has more than doubled her export during the past three years. This has not been brought about without a certain amount of disaster to those concerned, and the season for colonial butter just closed will long be remembered by the trade as the worst on record.

In the days before Victoria entered on the business of butter-shipping, it was the rule that the winter months afforded the best time of the year for the butter-shippers on the Continent and farmers at home to get good prices for their dairy produce, as production was at its minimum, and demand was invariably at the heels of supply. But steam and the cold chamber altered the whole aspect of affairs when the Victorian Government granted its bonus on butter shipped; and as it is summer there when it is winter here, prices rapidly dropped on the market, until the winter became the cheapest period. The working classes—indeed, all sections of the population—have benefited largely by the intense competition. Formerly it was impossible ever to get pure butter at a shilling a pound. There was certainly sold at the price a certain article bearing a strong resemblance to the product of the churn, but stearine entered largely into its composition, and the frequent prosecutions following on public analyses caused people to shun the low-priced article.

To Australia we owe the appearance of pure butter at a shilling a pound, which the poor have been able to purchase all through the trying winter of 1894-95; while during the spring and summer unprecedented prices have

been reached from the same cause, butter being retailed everywhere at tenpence a pound, while in some poor districts it has been vended at eightpence—a Midland firm, more enterprising than careful of its neighbouring traders' necessity of getting a 'living profit,' actually, at the worst period of depression in the wholesale market, selling pure butter at sixpence a pound. This has been rendered possible by the abnormally low currencies ruling on the wholesale market, where butter has sold as low as thirty-five shillings a hundredweight, very good butter being often procurable between sixty and eighty shillings. Denmark, as we have said, has not been driven from the field—having, in fact, increased her output—but she has had to be content with much lower prices, and this season her butter has sold for less than ever before. Her enormous trade with us has been built up by upright trading and the scrupulous vigilance of the authorities, the laws against adulteration being very severe, every package shipped at Copenhagen being subjected to rigid scrutiny to ascertain its purity. Thus Danish butter has come to be a synonym with the trade and the public for a pure article, and the Committee which controls the quotations at Copenhagen has been able to get a high price for the farmers of Denmark, because there was no such guarantee elsewhere. Here comes the proof of the sound business principles animating colonial shippers from their first entering on the enterprise. Government inspection has accompanied the bonus, and merchants here have ascertained that Australian butter is as pure as the Danish product. Thus the trade has been helped to magnify so considerably in such a short time.

But it is one thing to make a trade, another to keep up prices. It was easy for Denmark to do so in the old days, with no competitors worth speaking of; but with so many rivals in the field it is now practically impossible. France has lost a large portion of our trade, mainly because of the sophistication which her reckless shippers have indulged in, and she is not likely to recover the ground lost. But there are rivals to Denmark and Australia nearer home. The secret of the foreigners' success on our markets is the lack of uniformity which has always prevailed with dairy farmers in this country. Grocers know that, however pure and intrinsically good butter from English dairies may be, it is not likely to be the same in appearance and texture two weeks running; and as this results in the housewife raising a complaint that the butter is not of the same quality as previously supplied, grocers prefer, even in country districts, to go to the merchant selling foreign butter, who will agree to give it them the same in appearance week after week throughout the year. The solitary system of production in vogue in England is responsible for this, while the system practised in Denmark and the colonies of working on a co-operative plan—all the farmers in a district bringing their milk to a central factory or creamery, and receiving their share of the net results—is conducive to the production of butter of uniform quality. Lessons travel slowly in England, and the failure of a factory, erected on the Danish model in Wales a little while back,

to pay its projectors, is a proof of the inertness of farmers where their own interests are concerned.

But in Ireland—whence one hears so much of distress, but seldom of success—absolutely gigantic strides have been made of late years, and with a soil and climate exceptionally fitted for the dairy industry, a trade has grown up of such proportions as to form no mean antagonism to Denmark. Many factories and creameries are in existence in Ireland now, turning out thousands of pounds of splendid butter, and Denmark has been made to feel the touch of the competition, having been entirely supplanted in some districts. It has been the rule for Danish butter to be at the top of the quotations, and when it was quoted at one hundred and forty-five shillings a hundredweight, as it was only three or four years ago, Ireland could not get within fifteen or twenty shillings of the quotation. But now the quality of her butter is so far recognised that it is always within a few shillings of its rival, while a short time ago the quotations were level for Danish and Irish in Liverpool. This is a department of our trade which we can only hope will largely increase, to the benefit of the sister kingdom, and it is certain that, now it has gone forward, it will not stop. Germany and Holland and the United States have dropped into the rear as factors in the situation, and France is following suit, though the decreases in shipment from these countries combined are fully made up for by increase of exports from the South Pacific; while in other directions besides Denmark and Australasia, efforts are being made to get a portion of the immense trade, which takes more than ten millions sterling a year out of the country.

In the days when Denmark was not the power in the trade it is now, and when competition over twelve thousand miles of ocean was not dreamt of, Canada had a fair portion of the butter trade then existing. But when the people there thought they could do just as they liked, and sent across stuff which was good enough when nothing else could be got, it was, of course, refused here as soon as we had so many sources of supply to turn to where a good article could be obtained. Shippers in Montreal have blinded themselves to the change that has come over the trade, and have persisted in placing butter bought cheap in the summer in cold storage, to await the advent of better prices, and have then shipped it when the bloom has disappeared and all its connection with the pastures of the Dominion has been effaced. The natural result has been that merchants here have refused to buy it save as a substitute for train-oil, and the trade has dwindled to miserable proportions. Now—as it would seem, too late—they have awakened to a sense of the big mistake they have been making, and shipments are coming forward in cool chambers, whence they are transferred from railway refrigerator cars. On all of the new supply a bonus of a cent a pound is paid by the province of Quebec, the Government being responsible for the railway and steamship arrangements. This has to be fresh-made creamery butter, and the design is to re-establish

Canada's credit on our markets. Should the return be in proportion to the outlay, other provinces will no doubt follow the lead, and Canada once again become prominent in our returns.

Whatever profit the Dominion may reap from the venture, it is clear that consumers here must benefit by another accession to the ranks of those now catering for our tables. They may certainly look for a continuance of low prices, for to this result everything seems to point, especially as the Australian season opened this year much earlier than usual, the first arrival of the 1895-6 make having been some time ago sold on the market. One other thing, too, consumers have to congratulate themselves upon—the removal, through the cheapness of butter, of temptation on the part of vendors to

adulterate. The introduction of margarine has been a great boon to the poor when sold as such, but consumers always rather prefer the genuine article; and the era of low prices which is now on us has caused such a falling off in the demand for the substitute, that whereas in the first eight months of 1893 we imported 832,976 cwt. of margarine from abroad, the amount entering this year to the end of August has only been 597,423 cwt.; Holland, our chief source of supply, having lost custom to the extent of 157,603 cwt. in that period. In the table which follows, the chief sources of our butter supply are enumerated, but in 'other countries' lie concealed many centres near and remote whence demand might at any moment draw increased supplies.

COUNTRIES.	8 months, 1893. cwt.	8 months, 1894. cwt.	8 months, 1895. cwt.	8 months, 1893. Value.	8 months, 1894. Value.	8 months, 1895. Value.
Sweden	185,099	176,158	203,785	£1,001,407	£937,082	£1,075,028
Denmark	649,779	762,774	791,037	3,568,301	4,027,374	3,893,845
Germany	132,149	111,257	92,537	656,102	567,892	461,612
Holland	94,838	104,556	128,687	489,425	516,041	618,377
France	319,575	267,442	296,940	1,806,485	1,490,521	1,580,791
Australasia	101,095	203,760	245,940	519,792	999,696	1,090,428
Canada	13,232	2,908	8,353	57,123	11,624	32,002
United States	19,793	26,936	19,371	89,652	113,477	75,202
Other countries	77,216	99,281	129,318	393,995	489,931	634,047
Total	1,592,776	1,755,072	1,915,968	£8,582,282	£9,153,548	£9,461,332

PROOF POSITIVE.

CHAPTER III.

It was my eight-and-thirtieth birthday, the sixth of June, and I was crossing the fields outside the old cathedral city. I had been to see an out-lying patient of my employer's—a bed-ridden old woman, of as little importance in the world as myself, and I was now returning. The sun was high, and I had walked swiftly. I was glad to sit down in the shade of a broad elm near an old-fashioned country stile, for rest and coolness.

The city was so sleepy that no railroad came within two miles of it, but as I sat, I heard the puffing and screaming of a distant train. It stopped at the country station and went on again, sounding fainter and fainter, until it left the wide fields altogether silent. I must have fallen into a day-dream, and have allowed time to speed by me without counting, for it was the footstep of a passenger from that train which startled me (as it seemed) a mere minute after the noise of the engine had died away. A man vaulted the stile, and seeing me there, paused to assure himself of the way. A foreign accent struck my ear with a sense of odd familiarity. I looked up and recognised Dupré.

'Alwayne?' he said. The question declared itself in his look as plainly as in his voice. 'Is it Alwayne?' Before I could reply, he had seized my hand and held it strongly in both his own.

'My poor, dear Alwayne! My poor, poor,

dear, dear fellow! I have been hunting you for half a year.'

I drew my hand from his grasp and faced him.

'This is not the greeting you gave me the right to expect from you,' I said.

'Ah no!' he answered. 'But you are proved to be innocent. And how shall I speak to you? How shall I ask your pardon?'

'As for that,' I told him, 'you may spare yourself the trouble. My innocence never should have needed proof to a man who knew me as well as you did. I vow to Heaven that I would have taken the word of no man in the world against you in such a case. There are men in the world who are not born to such a baseness as I stood accused of, and I am one of them.'

'Alwayne!' he said. 'Alwayne! Listen to reason. The missing money has been found. And where do you think? In the safe, in the room in which you slept on that unhappy night!'

He put this with such an air of conviction, that, although I had half turned to leave him, I paused and asked savagely, 'What of that?'

'What of that? It is as clear as day. You had seen the safe in the upper room. You had observed to the dear old Professor that the money was not secure there because the safe had no lock. You had noticed that the other safe in the room below closed with a snap. You went to sleep, dreamed of danger, got up in your sleep, took away the money for safety, locked it up, and had forgotten all about it in the morning.'

'Rubbish!' I answered. 'I never walked in my sleep in my life.'

'How do you know that?' he retorted. 'You know only, at the most, that you have never been told so. Come, my dear Alwayne, the facts are proven. There is no question of your intent. There is no doubt as to how the thing happened. And Miss Gordon, let me tell you, is more heartbroken since the money was found and returned to her, than even when the terrible truth seemed first to have been forced upon her. She saw you, you remember.'

'What she saw,' I answered wearily, but with unshaken certainty—'what she saw, I cannot tell, but me she did not see.'

'But the Professor saw you too. How should they both be mistaken? You carried a lighted candle, which you left upon the floor of the landing outside the room. You were seen clearly.'

I stood half confounded, and the fields, trees, and hedges seemed to spin about me. But for Dupré's hand I should have fallen, and for a second or two I felt precisely as I had done at the moment when we two last parted. My terror of a possible recurrence of what had happened then, served, I think, to distract my mind from the thought which oppressed it.

'You are better now,' said Dupré.

'It was not I,' I persisted.

'Well,' said Dupré, 'I have proof positive, and I will convince you. But I am going to the "Green Dragon" hotel here, and if you are well enough to walk, I will tell you something by the way.'

'I am well enough,' I answered brusquely. Seven or eight years ago I had been prosperous and honoured. Now, what was I? A human hack, blasted in repute, shattered, ruined. I can forgive myself for my disdain and bitterness.

'Well,' he said, accommodating his steps to mine, which were not so elastic as they had been half an hour before, 'I shall tell you how the money came to be found.'

'My good sir,' I responded, 'I have not the slightest interest in the matter.'

'Ah, but you will have, by-and-by,' he said. 'The old house was being pulled down, and a contractor had bought the material. When the safe was turned over, the cash-box within it rattled, and the safe being unlocked, the money was found. The contractor was an honest fellow, and was well paid for honesty, you may be sure. But more than the money was found.'

Here, again, he spoke with so marked an emphasis, that, though I would willingly have said good-bye to him and the whole question, I felt constrained to speak.

'What else was found?'

'That proof positive I spoke of,' he responded, and I lapsed into silence. 'You shall see it for yourself,' he went on, 'when we come to the hotel. But in the meantime, I have something else to tell you. I am not here alone. I chose to walk across the fields, because I wanted to arrange in my own mind how I should tell you everything when we met. My companions have been driven by the main road to the hotel, and though they have a mile farther to travel, they will be there before us. I am married, Alwayne, since we saw each other last, and my wife is with me.'

I said nothing, and had indeed nothing to say. I had been indifferent to everything for years, and the nerves of interest, once dulled by such an experience as mine, are slow to feel again.

'I have another companion on my journey, Alwayne, the saddest, gentlest, and most suffering creature under the blue sky. You have suffered—suffered horribly, degradingly, undeservedly. But, Alwayne, she has suffered too. You must not look to find her what she was.'

The nerves of feeling were wide awake upon a sudden. I felt my heart beat, and the colour alter on my cheek. I made no pretence of not understanding him.

'You have done no charity to either of us in bringing Miss Gordon here,' I said. 'It was her want of faith in me which has made my life what it is. It is through her that an innocent man has walked the world in shame.'

'She has suffered, Alwayne! She has suffered!'

'And I have suffered!'

'But you have had the consolation of your own honour all along.'

'A consolation, truly!' I answered. And indeed it has maddened me a thousand times, as it would madden any man who had my history, to see that stale and foolish fallacy held up for comfort. The man unjustly hated and despised has in his breast a wound that never rankled in a rogue's.

'You will see her, Alwayne?'

'No!' I answered, the more vehemently that all my heart went out to her.

'Come,' he said, linking his arm in mine. 'You do not yet believe that you were really seen. Now, if I prove that to your own satisfaction—if I force you to believe against yourself, that no hand but your own removed that cash-box, will you change your mind?'

'There is no evidence in the world which would make me credit it. What I know, I know.'

'Wait till I show you my evidence,' said Dupré. 'If you are convinced, will you consent to meet her?'

'If I am convinced,' I answered, 'yes!'

From that moment we walked on in silence, and I guided him to the old-fashioned hotel. He gave his name there, and a waiter led him at once to a private sitting-room. There he left me for a mere instant, returning with a despatch-box in his hand. He set this upon the table in the centre of the apartment, and opened it deliberately, revealing a black pad and a white pad.

'Before Miss Gordon went to rest on that memorable night,' he said, 'she wrote a letter to you—a happy, girlish letter. I have it here'—tapping his breast—'and I will show it to you in a moment. But first, will you lay the finger-tips of your right hand on this blackened pad? So. A gentle pressure. Now transfer them to the white sheet. So. Now take this monocle and examine that impression and compare it with this.'

He took a sheet of paper from his breast-pocket, and handed it to me. I read the words, 'Always, always, always, your own Kathryn,' and below the signature, I saw the clearly

defined marks of four finger-tips. In a lightning flash, the memory of these blackened sheets of paper the Professor had been using for the skeleton leaves came back to me, and I set the marks made so long ago side by side with those so newly made. They were identical, a sign-manual no hand could forge. Each finger had its own delicate spiral pattern, and no other hand than mine in all the world could have left these two impressions.

'That little note,' said Dupré, tapping it as I held it in a shaking hand, 'was laid away in the cash-box until the morning. There was the something more which was found in the safe when it was opened. There was a sheet of newly prepared carbon paper on the table in Miss Gordon's room. You were seen to lay your hand upon it for a moment, as if to steady yourself.'

I sat down, feigning to compare the marks still further, but I saw nothing.

'They are alike,' I said at last, but Dupré had gone, without my notice.

I heard the rustle of a woman's dress, and turned. Kathryn stood there—how altered—how pale and troubled! She held her hands appealingly to me, and called me by my name.

'What can I say?' she asked me. 'I broke your heart to break my own.'

The tears in her beautiful eyes brimmed over, and I drew her to my heart.

A GOSSIP ABOUT PIANISTS.

By J. CUTHBERT HADDEN.

OF a couple of pianists; for we will talk only of great gods—of Rubinstein and of Bülow, both of whom have passed to their rest within the last few years. We have many pianists in these days, but we have no pianist with a personality that stands out like that of the two virtuosi just named. The modern school of technique has removed entirely the old difficulties of the keyboard, and the result has been a shoal of players who have captured the public with as much ease as a stage beauty captures the pit and the dress circle. It is true that other things besides talent have had to do with the making of some recent reputations. The pianist has been described as a pet of society, a man with a Polish name, who wins his first success through his photograph. But that is not the only way in which he may win success. He may win it, as Samson won his strength, by cultivating a superabundance of head-covering; for there is undoubtedly something in the remark of a cynical American, that 'people are a darned sight more interested in the colour of Paderewski's hair than they are in his tone colour.' He may win it, again, by a weird face; by a trick of posing at his instrument and making-believe to play divinely when he is only playing like a school-girl. He may win it, further, as Liszt used to say, by getting himself well watered in the newspapers; by ingeniously circulating a report of a deep-rooted

mysterious grief; by never openly taking anything more solid in the way of nourishment than seltzer and cigarettes. Above all, he may win it if he only have that indefinable 'something' which has an inexplicable attraction for the weaker sex. All this is not to say that the pianist may make a reputation without talent; but talent is too often at the bottom and humbug at the top. With Rubinstein and Bülow it was all talent and no humbug; and we propose now to look for a little at these giants of the keyboard, and to look at them in a phase of their careers which has been somewhat unaccountably neglected by those who write for the general reader.

Standing together and alone in the highest rank of pianoforte virtuosi, no two men could in outward aspect have been more unlike than Liszt and Rubinstein. This was especially noticeable when, as sometimes happened, the two were seen together. Tall, stately, dandified, in light kid gloves, Liszt, with his cascade of white hair falling well over his shoulders, presented a curious contrast to the carelessly dressed Rubinstein with the lion-like head, set on broad, well-shaped shoulders, the tremendous brow, and the protruding cheek-bones. 'Little nose and much hair,' was Rubinstein's own description of himself, and the description was literally correct. He had a strong Beethovenish cast of feature, which was often remarked; and there is an authentic story of his being mistaken at an English provincial railway station for the late Charles Bradlaugh, who was expected to arrive by the same train. This, by the way, was a curious incident. On becoming aware of the mistake that was being made, Rubinstein entered thoroughly into the fun of the situation, and, being an excellent Biblical scholar, he improved the occasion by addressing his 'admirers' in terms which left them in some confusion as to Mr Bradlaugh's consistency. Rubinstein wore his jet-black hair like the mane of a lion. On one occasion he lauded at a friend's house in Liverpool after having been for some time in Ireland, where he had allowed his locks to grow to inordinate length. He was persuaded to visit the hairdresser, who, of course, asked him whether he would have much taken off. On his replying in the negative, the operator ventured the remark: 'I would really advise you to have a good lot taken off, unless you wish to pass for a German fiddler!' Rubinstein laughed heartily at the sally, and Charles Keene having heard of it, the incident was presently immortalised in *Punch*. As a matter of fact, no musician was ever less of an exquisite than Rubinstein. He had no affectations, unless it were that curious disarray of the necktie seen in most of the photographs. He wore black broadcloth with a nap on it of the kind that parsons used to wear fifty years ago; and he would allow himself to become so shabby that railway guards often asked him to show his ticket before permitting him to enter a first-class carriage. He always wore a soft felt hat, and the more battered and

disreputable it became, the fonder he seemed to grow of it. One can imagine the elegant Liszt being ashamed to be seen in his company—and indeed there is a doubtful story of the one having fled from the other in order to save his dignity.

A long and a bitter struggle he had, this Anton Rubinstein, before he secured his fame and his fortune. He used to delight in showing his friends the portrait of an old man who once bought all the tickets that were bought for one of his juvenile recitals. And he had even a better story than this. At Nijni-Novgorod, when he was only thirteen, he gave a concert which attracted an audience of only one. Brilliantly the little fellow played for two hours, but not the slightest applause was forthcoming. Then he stopped and addressed his audience politely, asking if his playing did not deserve a little encouragement. The dilettante leaned forward to catch the words addressed to him, and the young pianist was stupefied to find that his only listener was as deaf as a post! This singular person used to frequent the concerts to conceal his infirmity.

Nor does this exhaust the tale of Rubinstein's troubles. In Vienna, whither as a youth of seventeen he had gone to make his way in the world, he lived in a garret, and gave lessons for so little that he was often in the direst need of bread. He had brought with him a dozen letters of introduction to prominent people from the Russian ambassador and his wife in Berlin. He made his calls and left a number of his letters, then waited for replies and invitations. None came. After five or six letters had met this response of absolute silence, he resolved to find the reason, and so opened one of the missives. And this was what he read: 'MY DEAR COUNTESS—To the position which we occupy is attached the tedious duty of patronising and recommending our various compatriots, in order to satisfy their oftentimes clamorous requests. We therefore recommend to you the bearer of this, one Rubinstein.' The riddle was solved, and Rubinstein was still in want of bread. Liszt was in Vienna at the time. In Paris, some years before, he had heard the youthful prodigy give a recital, had kissed him, and proclaimed him 'the heir of my playing.' Now he invited him to dinner. 'It was a most welcome invitation,' said Rubinstein in after years, 'since the pangs of hunger had been gnawing me for several days. I cannot tell you,' he added, 'what I went through, but such is the fate of an artist: he must suffer to be anything.'

Rubinstein was in Berlin when the Revolution of 1848 broke out, and it became necessary for him to return to Moscow. He had, of course, to cross the Russian frontier, and, not knowing that a pass was necessary, he did not provide himself with one. He carried a huge trunkful of musical manuscripts with him, but the frontier police did not understand his hieroglyphics, and confiscated the papers as seditious matter! Expostulation and entreaty proved alike unavailing. The police declined to believe the supposed revolutionist, and although, by playing the piano, he convinced them that he was a musician, they sent him to prison all the same. It was found afterwards that the precious manuscripts

had been sold to various greengrocers and buttermen!

Rubinstein was a great traveller. There was scarcely a country on the face of the globe that he had not visited, and scarcely an important city that he had not played in. His single visit to America in 1872 was perhaps the most fruitful of incident. In Boston his very clothes were rent by enthusiastic admirers in search of souvenirs. Women rushed on the platform and embraced him, and the entire audience literally yelled: 'Come back again! come back again!' In New York he made a tremendous sensation. One evening somebody brought to him on the platform a silver wreath on a white satin cushion, but he only looked cynically at the gift, and gave his leonine head a meaning shake. He was, however, very 'cranky' on this American tour. To begin with, he did not like the people calling his recitals 'shows,' 'Just as if my concerts were menageries,' he would say indignantly. Then he was disgusted with the huge poster portraits of himself which stared at him from every hoarding and from every shop window. It was not solely because they were bad portraits, but because he disliked being looked upon as a curiosity or a phenomenon. One consolation, however, came to him. In his travels out West he arrived at a place where Henry Ward Beecher was announced to lecture, and when he saw the preacher's portraits he cheered up immensely: they were far worse than his own! It was in New York that a recital almost failed because some one had dared to put side by side with one of his solos in the programme a couple of Strauss waltzes. That was enough. Rubinstein sat down calmly, and absolutely refused to play. The manager—it was just before the concert—implored, argued, entreated, threatened. It was of no avail. Only when a staff of ready assistants had with pen and ink scored out of the programme the offending items, only then did Rubinstein consent to play. After the recital, he said gravely to the director: 'I never regretted so much being a poor man. Had I had the money, I would have paid you the forty thousand dollars forfeit, and gone straight back to Europe.' And all on account of poor Strauss! On this tour, Rubinstein gave two hundred concerts at the rate of forty pounds per concert; twenty years later, the terms he demanded were a hundred and fifty pounds per concert.

When in a good humour, Rubinstein was the most genial fellow imaginable; when in a bad humour, he was simply a fiend. He was disappointed at not being recognised as a composer, and his disappointment led to frequent fits of brooding melancholy. Then he would sit smoking his cigarette, and reply only in monosyllables, with his eyes half closed. He was in such a mood one night in the house of the late Mr T. L. Stillie, the Glasgow musical critic. Midnight had long passed, and Rubinstein still remained in his armchair smoking his cigarette. At last Mr Stillie ventured to ask: 'Do you like Beethoven?' Rubinstein took another whiff, and answered quietly: 'Beethoven is good.' After a silence of half an hour, the host asked: 'Do you like Wagner?' Rubinstein, throwing his cigarette away, replied: 'Wagner is not good.' Another

half-hour passed, and Stillie, having exhausted his series of questions, proposed to retire. 'Don't go,' said Rubinstein; 'I like your conversation very much!' And they remained together till three o'clock in the morning without saying anything more than 'Good-night' when they parted.

When he was in such a mood as this, it went pretty hard with Rubinstein's pupils, especially if the student were stupid or stubborn. He has been known to send a young fellow spinning on the floor when he replaced him on the piano stool; and his sarcasm on other occasions would make a man ill for days together. 'Do you hear that note?' he would thunder, as he showed how the tone should be produced. 'That note is worth your whole life—and more.' But he could be kind and gentle too. On one occasion when he heard that an English lady, a perfect stranger to him, had not been able through ill-health to attend his recital, he went to her house next morning and played for her the whole programme. He was a devoted admirer of the fair sex, and was never happier than when paying compliments to a pretty woman. When he was in London the Princess of Wales sent for him, and he met her with the naïve remark that he was delighted to see her looking so lovely. More than that, he proceeded to kiss her hand, and when the Princess withdrew, saying hastily it was not the custom in England, Rubinstein replied blandly, 'With us, it is the law.' Under the spell of his genius hundreds of women threw themselves in his path. 'It is quite strange,' he would say, 'but I love them all, even tenderly, though they do not believe it.' It was absolute torture to him to know that a woman who had once loved him could forsake him for another, and this 'not because I care for the woman, but because I am an egotist.' Of the mental powers of the sex, he had no exalted opinion. Women, he said, go a certain length, defined and definable, and beyond this they never get; but, he added, 'they are adorable, and if deprived of their society, I would hang myself.'

As to Rubinstein's playing, what shall he said? His virtuosity was unique to such an extent, that there was truth even in the remark of the humorist that Rubinstein's wrong notes were better than the right notes of others. There were no difficulties for his fingers: he even invented difficulties hitherto unheard of, for the mere pleasure of conquering them. And his kinds of 'touch' were so varied! He occasionally showed such strength of finger that people would look under the piano to see whether he had not smashed through the keyboard. It was as if he thrashed the piano as an hereditary foe with whom he had to settle on an account of long standing. Many an instrument broke down under the trial. Yet Rubinstein could play as delicately and as sweetly as Chopin himself, and if he were accompanying a vocalist, it was sometimes difficult to tell whether the piano or the vocalist was doing the singing. This combination of 'touches' was the more remarkable considering the physical aspect of his fingers, which were short, thick, and blunt, affording no promise of pliancy or of

feathery lightness, but rather the reverse. But Rubinstein himself could give the explanation, and if he did give it, it was in the words of the Greek saying: 'The gods sell to us all good things for labour.'

Twenty years have elapsed since Hans von Bülow first appeared in this country, and the younger generation cannot, of course, remember the extraordinary impression he created among a public accustomed solely to a school of playing remarkable for entire absence of original thought and variety of expression. But the number of eminent pianists who crowded on Bülow's heels lessened greatly the excitement produced by his earlier appearances, and in later years he came to be known better for his eccentricities than for his achievements as an artist. When a pianist told his admirers that he preferred beefsteaks to bouquets, it was more likely that they should remember the saying than the particular way in which he rendered a Beethoven sonata. The Bülow anecdote has in truth become a trifle doubtful in these days, for all the floating musical wit of the time is being fathered upon the eminent pianist. Still, there is a sufficient body of authentic story to serve the wants of the most voracious *raconteur*. There was indeed seldom a concert or a recital of Bülow's from which one might not carry away some amusing reminiscence. In Berlin he was once conducting one of Beethoven's concertos. In the pause before the Dead March, which constitutes the second movement, Bülow, in deference to the funeral music, was seen rapidly to take off his ordinary white gloves and substitute a pair of faultless black kids, which disappeared again as soon as the Dead March was played. He had a fondness for this kind of display. In Berlin, while he was engaged as conductor at one of the opera-houses, the management decided to produce an operetta which he regarded as worthless, and therefore declined to conduct. While the work was being performed, Bülow sat in one of the boxes close to the orchestra, attired in a mourning hat with long black streamers, a lemon and white handkerchief in his hand, according to the German custom at funerals. The whimsicality was presently explained when Bülow confided to one of his friends that the operetta was being buried, and that Herr von Bülow now attended at the obsequies!

While conducting, he was perfectly free and easy, and he would think nothing of stopping to address the audience, or to admonish a lady who persisted in waving her fan out of time with the music. Not long before his death he was conducting a concert in Berlin, when he took it into his head to make a speech about Bismarck, at the close of which he called upon the audience and the band for a 'Hoch.' The audience obliged him with a cheer; but the band did not see the fun of the thing, and remained stoically silent. This was too much for Bülow, who stepped in front of the audience, deliberately took a handkerchief from his pocket, wiped the dust from his shoes, and walked majestically off the platform.

Bülow was magnetically attracted by satirical souls. When he asked a Vienna friend, 'How

do you like the pianist B——?' and received the reply, 'He possesses a technique which overcomes everything easy with the utmost difficulty,' he exclaimed with peals of laughter, 'That's the sort of talk I like.' And that was the sort of talk he indulged in himself. Midway in the seventies, when he conducted in Glasgow, the local musicians and friends of the art gave him a grand banquet. Towards the end of the evening, when everybody was in high spirits, Bülow rose, and in the coolest possible manner administered the following damper: 'Gentlemen, I have the greatest admiration for your concerts and all your musical conductors. I only regret to say that they resemble too much the omnibus conductors. You ask why? Because they are always behind—omnibus conductors behind on the vehicle, musical conductors behind in time.' Nor did he spare even his friends when he was in the sarcastic mood. On a certain occasion he was conducting a concert in Hamburg, and one of the pieces to be performed was Rubinstein's *Ocean Symphony*. What did he do? He sniffed at the score, turned it upside down on the desk, and then throwing it aside, said, 'To conduct music like this, one must have long hair; I have not got it.' This story, by the way, was told to Rubinstein shortly after, and he at once wrote to Bülow. 'I wrote him,' he says, 'that his opinions were never the same two days running, and inasmuch as that which he abused to-day he praised to-morrow, there was still hope for my poor music. Also, if he had taken the trouble to measure my hair, I regretted not having had leisure to measure his ears.'

Agreeable and polite as a rule, Bülow had one rather disconcerting peculiarity, when he met any one to whom for any reason he felt a repugnance. He never noticed the individual, but got away as quickly as he could. At Copenhagen a 'cellist was introduced to him with a possible view to an engagement. The poor man was not only possessed of great artistic talent, but also of an enormous nose. Bülow stared at him for a moment, and then rushed away with the remark: 'No, no! this nose is impossible.' Tenor singers as a body he did not like, probably because of their affectations, and it was this antipathy that led to his witticism that the tenor is not a man, but a disease. He was extremely fond of animals, and when resident in Berlin he very often spent his afternoons at the Zoological Gardens. He was a great circus-goer, but as likely as not he would go to sleep in the middle of the performance. Indeed, like Napoleon, he could sleep almost anywhere and at any time. The Director of the Opera at Rotterdam once invited him to a performance of Nessler's *Rat-catcher of Hamelin*. At the close, when the musician naturally looked for a compliment, Bülow went on the stage, and with a gracious bow said, 'Dear Director, I owe you a most delightful evening: it is a long time since I had so fine a nap.' He was a great ladies' man, and would do anything in reason to please the sex. In society he was extremely agreeable, but he could not sit out long dinners, and would get up in the middle and retire

with a cigarette. Both he and Rubinstein were tremendous smokers, but Rubinstein beat him hollow with something like seventy-five cigarettes a day.

THE VICAR OF WROCKSLEY.

By JOHN STAFFORD.

HE still lives at Wrocksley, though the cross in the churchyard says he died on a day years ago, and the villagers, who recall that day with head-shaking, say so too. But a life cannot be accounted dead which reverberates on in other lives as the old vicar's does; and the people of Wrocksley, looking into their hearts and seeing the gentle, white-haired presence there, feel that in his own way he lingers yet among them, and they are willing enough to have it so, remembering what he was. It is one of those afterglows which large natures often leave, by which those who knew them in their mortal shining may still find some light to live by. Yet it was hardly of the vicar's seeking, any more than the love was which made such aching, one autumn day, under bodice and vest at Wrocksley; and if indeed he craved anything at the last, more than other guerdon, it was the rest which God had brought him—that, and no more.

So said old Peter, the sexton, whose daughter, Hannah, had been the vicar's housekeeper; and in his walnut visage was the look of a man who knew all he was saying. Others, seeing it, and not sharing the things which his memory held, only shook their heads, thinking of the opinion he had that there were none so happy as those who rested so, and that there were no sleeping-places like those he dug with his own spade. For it was Peter's boast that he had bedded down the people of Wrocksley and covered them up comfortably for half a century or more, and that never a one of them had known ache or pain, or even the edge of a sorrow, unless it was Betty Griggle, who had left a stocking behind her, and was seen sometimes by fearsome folk in her roofless cottage, seeking it. But Peter's heart often pulled against his philosophy, which was a personal growth, born of much grave-digging; and when his thoughts get busy with other days, and he remembers the figure in them, his rheumy eyes take a softer look, and his regrets give a sigh to the breeze, for the vicar's sake, lie he never so still under the cedar-tree. And if Peter pauses in such moments by an old green wicket to gaze down a leafy vista, as if to a Past it led to, it is perhaps because he can recall better there the few happenings which make up our story—if so it may be called, which is little more than a reminiscence, scarce worth the reading, some might say—of an obscure country parson, who lived alone with a dead hope, and found it the best of company, so long as it was 'a sweet sorrow' merely, and not a burden more than a heart could carry.

It was an almost forgotten circumstance at Wrocksley, that years ago, not long after his induction to the living, the vicar and Miss Hawksley, of the manor-house, had been much

together in parochial work; especially during the dark, epidemic time, which had kept Peter so busy, and which, towards its close, almost proved fatal to Miss Hawksley herself. But it was towards her recovery, before health had done all its duty, and when the arm of another was still good to lean on, that she and the vicar would be seen oftenest in company, either in the manor-house garden, or in the long lime avenue which led from it to the wicket by the church. If the trees therein could be made to talk, like those which Dante saw, they might repeat what they heard and saw then of word or glance or subtle play of feature. But because of his mature years, and his uniform kindness to all in his flock, the vicar's name was never seriously linked with that of the young girl; and if the parish had any suspicion at all of a more than pastorly interest in her, they were quite allayed some time later, when at St George's, Hanover Square, Joan Hawksley was made one with that dashing young officer, the Hon. Mr Delmar. For, whatever the effort cost him, it was the vicar who smilingly ordered the ringers to their bells; who with beaming face umpired the sports on the village green; and who laughingly helped old Peter home, when over-much toasting had unsettled his outlook. And when, after the honeymoon, the young people came to Wrocksley for a farewell day or two, before sailing for India, it was the vicar who gave them a welcome beside which Mr Hawksley's was tepid, not to say sullen.

That it should be so, made some wonderment for gossip to play with; for the old yeoman had gone up for the wedding in the blithest of humours, leaving money for the sports, and a dinner at the 'Crown,' with a barrel or two of beer thrown in to give it a Bacchic flow. And now he who had seemed as jovial then as any Silenus, was walking up and down his acres, a moody, haggard man. But the busy tongues soon had the truth to wag with. Mr Hawksley was found one morning a few weeks later lying still in his room, with a pistol in his hand, and wide-open eyes which never winked. It was his way of escaping from the two men in possession. In no long time afterwards the manor-house and all in and about it were brought to the hammer. Instead of a rich man, the beautiful Miss Hawksley had wedded a penniless younger son. Perhaps only the vicar knew that she had not even married for love, but only for her father's sake, to avert this ruin.

A shadow grew to his face, and he became for a time fonder of his retirement than had been his wont. He walked a deal in his garden, as if, like Plato, he could think better there; and sometimes, after sundown, he would cross over from the vicarage and pass through the green wicket to the avenue beyond. He would re-appear in an hour or so, but with paler face, as he paused to look up at the stars, as if wondering at their happy twinkling with that churchyard beneath them and such ruth as his. It was at some such moment, perhaps, that into his darkness certain fireflies of thought came dancing, like runaway stars themselves, to show him a path through the slough.

Wrocksley was already recovering itself. The Saturday night hilarity at the 'Crown' had become less of a sputter; timorous people had ceased to avoid the manor-house; Peter had resumed his humming as he made his beds, or mowed neatness to the grassy places; and now, as the harvest was gathered in, and all saw how rich and good it was, cheerfulness ruled the days, and soon the cheeriest of all was the vicar.

From that time, as if impelled by some inward need for a life of wider relation, he became ceaselessly active in the parish; but always with such tact and delicacy, such tenderness and affection for those both in and out of his flock—for there were some few dissenters at Wrocksley—that the people's regard for him became a sort of communal possession, a joint warming of hearts, felt rather than understood, as they felt the sunbeams without recking of heat-waves. It was not all done at once, nor did Wrocksley ever become, in the years that followed, an ideal village, where no sinning was, or naughtiness of nature. The vicar knew his parish, knew it to be a very human little place, just as he was human, and no better to his own judging than any man of them all, who did his duty, and kept as good as he might, being a son of Adam and no angel.

Yet withal the vicar lived a very lonely life—as lonely as any shepherd on the hillsides, whose flock is his only care, and who is glad to pipe for company, when all was safe, and no lambs were in the pits, or poor ewes in the waters of affliction. The vicar's pipes were the organ-pipes, and young Caleb, the son of Peter, earned odd pennies by blowing breath to them, while the player's long fingers moved lovingly about the worn yellow keys, filling the church with a faint atmosphere of music, which the roosting rooks could barely hear as they swayed overhead in the night wind.

On one such evening, when the sun was behind the hills, and the mists were gray by the river, Peter stood at the bottom of his garden, smoking his pipe, and looking across his dormitory with eyes which had past days in them. The church door was ajar, and slow-moving melodies floated over to the listener, gliding from one key to another in a major and minor chain, as if the vicar were telling musical beads. Peter knew those airs, and whose name it was on the front of the tattered book the player had before him; but it was only rarely he heard them, and now, as he pulled at his shag, old faces shaped in the wreaths of it, and he was living again in times past, with a gentle puffing at the sight of them.

Then, all at once, he saw his own churchyard again, and it was not an idle gaze. A dark figure had just glided in from the lych-gate, and was crouching now over by the palm cross, and Peter was watching her steadily, his heart working faster than usual. She remained quite still; but he could hear something athwart the melody which made him put his pipe away and look as if he had never heard such a sound a thousand times before.

He went slowly up to her, but she did not hear him, though she had ceased weeping and was listening to the organ, her black veil raised,

so that her face was dimly visible. A white, wasted profile was all that he could see, but Peter knew it well. She looked up half dazedly at the sound of her name; then faintly smiling, she caught his hand and kept it while she rose to her feet and made a motion to the church door. Peter, feeling the hint of it, led her thence, and they entered and stood a moment looking up at the gray head of the vicar, who, deep in an *Ave Verum*, played on in his little island of light, unconscious of everything. Peter felt his arm clutched tighter, and a pull back into the shadow of the doorway, where the trembling woman fell on the old fellow's shoulder to weep anew. But starting up suddenly, she almost dragged him away, away to the gate, into the lane, and on to his cottage, into which he had to assist her, so weak was she grown and helpless.

The old organ, as if in a reverie of half-forgotten days, when it floated to the touch of maiden fingers, discoursed a sweetness which it seldom gave to the coarser promptings of man. The saintly figures in the windows seemed to awake and to listen in quaint attitudes; the Virgin gazed more tenderly on her child; the centurion's visage softened as he looked on the kneeling woman; a benigner peace was in the face of the dead Christ. It was but the moon, slow-rising and shining softly through the many-hued figures; and presently the player, seeing his shadow grow to the music-page, lifted his hands from the keys, and the organ, heaving a sigh from its leathern lungs, went back to its sleep.

The vicar descended from the loft with the look of a man who had been dreaming a dream, and was still holding on by the fringe of it. But seeing the boy-face beside him, he smiled, and felt in his pocket for the expected coin, talking, the while, of the lad's pet jack-daw, and of another one of Rheims, which he tells of as they walk together to the liegiate.

A few hours more, and Wrocksley is asleep under the moon, seeming in the yellow sheen only a shadow-village, shaped there from the mists which rest about it. But soon the dawn comes, and its cockerows ring out, and it rouses grumblingly, yawning, and eye-rubbing into fuller wakefulness. Then it goes forth into the dewy lanes and fields, while the sun mounts higher, drinking up the mist and drying the tears of opening flower-eyes, till all is warm and lovable and fair to see, for it is autumn time, and lush with growth in garden and field. Therefore every one is easy-humoured and cheerful in greeting generally; and it seems ill-fitting that Peter should be so gruff in his rejoinders and heavy of aspect, as he makes his way to the vicar's orchard, scythe in hand. But so he is all day. He cuts his way between the trees, pausing here and there to whet his curved blade, with sometimes an anxious look across to his cottage, and then at the vicarage near him, as thought leaped from one to the other. And when, by-and-by, Hannah brings him a jug of cider, and lingers plying questions, he turns on her almost angrily.

'Never yo' mind, lass, who her be; nor why her came in the manner her did, an' with such sickness on her. Keep yer teeth tight; an' if

vicar tells yer it's a fine day, or the like o' that, say, "Yes, it is," an' let him go his way. D'ye hear, Hannah? D'ye hear?'

Hannah hears, but with eyes half frightened, and goes back with her jug, fuller of questions than ever.

So the day wears on; the sun nears the hills, and sets them all ablaze; then the fire dies sullen, and grayness comes and darkness, followed soon by a new dawn eastwards, where the moon mounts in the silence to look again at Wrocksley. It is so still that the vicar's pen creaks like a tortured thing as it travels along, leaving brave words behind it. It is harvest time, and the vicar likes the subject. His lamp yellows as the white light comes stronger from the garden; but pursuing his way he comes to an end at last, and is looking through the sermon, adding neater touches and rounding doubtful periods, when he glances up with a start. A shadow has crossed the papers. It is Peter at the open window, hat in hand.

'Sir, I'—

'Come in, man,' says the vicar heartily. 'You quite startled me.—Is Hannah asleep again?'

'Not as I know of, sir. I came in through the side gate, an'—an' seeing yer in here, I made bold'—

'It is no intrusion, Peter. I have just finished my writing, and am glad to see you.—Anything wrong?'

Peter turns his hat round nervously, looks at the vicar, then out into the garden.

'It's a case o' sickness, sir—a lady as maybe yo'll remember. Her's at my cottage now—Major Delmar's widow, sir.'

Peter shuffles a foot, staring harder than ever at the moonlight.

'Her's bin ailing some time, it seems—ever since she lost her son. He were washed overboard in a storm they had, an' her's never got over the shock it give her. She came back here o' Thursday, an' I saw her, an' she arsked me to let her rest awhile. But she got worse, an' I sent for Dr Turrell o' Bilchester. He's just bin again—maybe yo' heard the gig, sir—an' he's given her a draught. Her's asleep now, but that weak, sir, her poor breath would scarce move a candle flame. Her arsked me not to tell yer, but she's hardly bin sensible since, an' I think it right you should know, sir, as an old—an old parishioner is back again among us.'

Still Peter looks away, torturing his hat. He can only hear laboured breathing, then a voice which he has never heard before.

'I will go with you to her.'

But the vicar trembles into the chair again; and Peter has to pour out a little wine from a decanter and offer it to him.

'Thank you, Peter. A touch of faintness. This heat is so trying. I am better now. Give me your arm. Ah, now we are right. Not so young as I was, Peter.—Mrs Delmar, you say? And she is back at Wrocksley?—This way, Peter; this way.'

They go out by the hall, where the vicar reaches for his wideawake, telling Hannah to go to bed if she likes, but to leave the side door on the latch. He is stronger now, and

dispenses with Peter's assistance as he walks to the cottage.

Hour after hour the vicar watched, on his knees most of the time, but always with his eyes to the face on the pillow, which is so white among the dark masses of hair, and as still almost as a dead face. Prue, Peter's eldest daughter, dozed fitfully the while in an adjoining room, with little starts now and again, and a sleepy lifting of eyelids, lest she should go off altogether, and so lose hold of duty. But Prue grew heavier, for it had been ironing day, and the sun had been hot as well as the fire, and she had much enjoyed her supper; so that, by-and-by, her head forgot its nodding, and Prue was soundly sleeping.

Her sense of hearing was the first to awake—or seemed to be; for she is not sure now whether the low voices speaking were mere dream-things only, or actual sounds which reached her. But what the few detached words were she would never say; and when Peter first questioned her, and saw the purport of her look, he stooped and kissed her—a rare thing for him to do—and said, 'Right, lass! don't tell even me.' But while the words were still fresh in her brain, and she was standing with a flush half of shame at having yielded so to the comfort of the elbow-chair, she seemed struck by the silence about her, and wondering at it, made her way softly to the other room. She beheld the risen sun shining full on the face of the patient. It was quite still, and the half-shut eyes were glazing under their lashes. One arm was stretched out, showing some of its white roundness, and the hand was in those of the vicar's, as he knelt with his forehead against it, silent and without motion. Prue was turning to go, feeling that was not a sight for her, when he looked up and saw her. He rose to his feet straightway, appearing calm, and his voice was as usual as he crossed the limp hands, remarking that the end had come a few minutes ago, and that she might now shut out the sun. There was no dejection in his face; only a strange light in his eyes, as when sorrow and gladness burn together and are one.

That light was shining still, when three days later he conducted the body to the grave, and stood there in the sunbeams reading the office of the dead; and Peter, seeing it, as he stood, spade in hand, apart from the people, looked down to his clayey boots; but failing to see them, cleared his throat and cuffed Caleb's ear for standing there with his hands in his pockets.

But the vicar was never the same after that; indeed he weakened so that he was ordered a long rest; and for a time Wrocksley was in charge of a *locum tenens*. In the following January the vicar returned, apparently strong again, and for some months appeared to be quite his old self. Towards September, however, he fell away again. His nights became increasingly restless, and Hannah's cookery of lessening account, which seemed to hurt her. She ran over to her home one evening to talk distressedly of it with her father. But Peter said nothing—only turned to Prue, and asked the date of the newspaper beside her. She

told him, and he smoked on as before; till Prue said suddenly: 'Why, this is the day Mrs Delmar died, father!'

'So it is, wench,' said Peter; 'an' I put her to rest a year ago come Tuesday.'

There was more talk between Hannah and Prue; then good-nights, and a mounting of lights to upper windows, which presently darkened again.

Before long there is only one light shining in Wrocksley, and that is from the vicar's bedroom. The moon, creeping higher, can see it beaming steadily hour after hour, like a great yellow eye glaring on to the churchyard. It is as if it saw something there, and cannot look away. The moon hides her face, and a low moaning comes from the trees. The eye glares fiercer in the new darkness, till the cloud has sailed on and the moon peers out again. The dawn comes, and the sun, and long shafts of light shine from between the trees on grinning gargoyles and mullioned window—shifting sun-patches fretted with leaves. But one beam shines full on the figure that lies there in sight of the vicarage window, and the dewdrops glint in the gray hair like gems that have fallen on it. With his face to the ground, and his hands tightly clenching the grass, the vicar lies on, caring nothing for the sunbeam. A robin, perching on the headstone, sings greeting to him; but he pays no heed. An old man stumbles across from the gate and kneels by him, calling his name. There is no answer; and still calling, he turns the face upwards. But the wet features never change, and the pale lips have no word for him. Then Peter stands up and bares his old head.

He was fast asleep, was the Vicar of Wrocksley.

OUR SIMIAN COUSINS.

THE differences separating men from simians are happily wide and apparent to everybody; as for the similarities that likewise exist, they are not quite so obvious, and it may be interesting to point out some of the most remarkable of them.

That human beings should be largely covered with short fine hairs which serve no apparent purpose is worth noting in the first place, and it is especially worthy of observation that, as amongst simians, these filaments grow upwards on the forearm and downwards above the elbow. This arrangement of hair on the arms serves with our 'poor relations' a useful purpose, for, crouching on a thick bough, after the manner of their kind, and holding on to another branch at a convenient height, it allows the rain to drain off from their hands and shoulders at their elbow joints, and thus, in a measure, protects them from cold, to which they are highly susceptible.

Like men, the larger apes have no tails, and if they have not lost them, as Lord Monboddo argued that men had lost theirs, namely, by sitting on them, they have at any rate worn away part of their hairy covering by reclining at the base of trees, rendering visible a black and glossy skin like that of a negro's.

The gorilla walks in a semi-upright position, knees very much bent, using its long arms as crutches. It does not, however, lay the palms of its hands on the ground, as to do so would bring it too much forward on all-fours, but its second finger-joints instead—a habit which has denuded those joints of hair. Now, here comes in a striking coincidence, for, if one holds up the back of his hand to the light, it will be observed that the fine hairs dispersed elsewhere over it are entirely absent from the place indicated.

It is manifest, according to the theory of descent, that the closest resemblances between men and monkeys should occur between the lower races of the former and the highest of the latter, and that this is the fact is certainly indubitable. The negro's profile—his protuberant jaws, retreating forehead, and flat nose—is strangely like that of the ape's. His projecting ears, length of arm, shortness of neck, thickness and shape of skull, lightness and conformation of brain, &c., all point in the same direction. Similarly to apes, the lower races of mankind are unable to oppose their thumbs and forefingers with any effect. A writer in *Blackwood's Magazine* tells us how he tested a Bushman in this matter. 'Pinch my finger,' he told him—'pinch much harder,' he urged; but the pressure 'would not have injured a fly.'

Polynesians, Malays, and other inferior races make use of their outstretched great toes in climbing trees, after the manner of monkeys. Children, likewise, can take a strong grip with the great toe, and if a spoon be inserted, they can hold it as firmly with the foot as with the hand.

The arms of monkeys are long and strong, to facilitate their movements in trees; and when the females would escape from their numerous forest foes, they are compelled to use both hands, and thus the young ones must save themselves by clinging to their mothers as best they can. It has been shown by Dr Louis Robinson that in newly-born children this development of arm and strength of grip is absolutely amazing. 'I have now records of upwards of sixty cases,' he states, 'in which the children were under a month old, and in at least half of these the experiment was tried within an hour of birth. In every instance, with only two exceptions, the child was able to hang on to the finger or a small stick by its hands, like an acrobat from a horizontal bar, and sustain the whole weight of its body for at least ten seconds. In twelve cases, in infants under an hour old, half a minute passed before the grasp relaxed; and in three or four, nearly a minute. In order to satisfy some sceptical friends, I had a series of photographs taken of infants clinging to a finger or to a walking-stick. Invariably the thighs are bent nearly at right angles to the body, and in no case did the lower limbs hang down and take the attitude of the erect position. This attitude, and the disproportionately large development of the arms compared with the legs, gave the photographs a striking resemblance to a well-known picture of the celebrated chimpanzee in the Zoo.' This disproportionate strength of arm, which appears to have come down as a kind of relic of days spent in primeval woods, seems,

like other of the facts alluded to, only explicable on the theory of descent.

The way children first walk with their toes pointed inwards has also been observed to be peculiarly monkey-like. Fortunately, as they acquire more the special characteristics of their own race, they outgrow many ways and tricks which render their appellation of 'little monkeys' rather appropriate.

When a monkey has achieved some mischievous trick, the manner it draws back the corners of its mouth and wrinkles its eyelids resembles a human smile very closely; and its habit in alarm of rapidly raising and lowering its eyebrows and forehead may be noticed in a minor degree in some men when much excited. Raising the eyebrows, opening wide the eyes, and showing more or less of the whites, is to be observed as a vestige of this habit in nearly every one when startled or surprised, but perhaps more in women than in men. The pout of the lips in impotent displeasure, as occasionally seen on the faces of children, and even of women—heroines of novels, for instance, are at times described with 'a pout' on their 'pretty lips'—is quite common amongst simians. In Darwin's *Expression of the Emotions* there is a picture of a chimpanzee deprived of its fruit, on whose face a pout is amusingly prominent.

It has been asserted that, in using fire, man differs fundamentally from all the lower animals; but Emin Pasha reports having seen numbers of apes walking in single file, carrying torches, on a night expedition to rob an orchard. Besides man, only apes use implements. They break off branches for clubs, open oysters with stones, and hurl missiles of various kinds with great dexterity.

The deceased chimpanzee 'Sally' gave rise to much reflection by her intelligent ways. Without any difficulty or mistake, she would hand visitors, at their request, any stated number of straws up to at least ten, and, on occasions, she has been known by her keeper to count up to twenty. She knew right from left, would use a spoon, and sip with it until the cup was empty. Some savages there are who are unable to count above three; many cannot enumerate beyond the number of their fingers; and thus it will not be denied that her intelligence was, by comparison, most remarkable.

It was stated by a writer in the *Times* that the death of this ape was hastened by drink. Whether this be true or not, her partiality for alcoholic beverages was well known; and no secret was made of the fact that she was daily indulged with a pint of beer. This predilection for intoxicants constitutes another feature of resemblance between men and monkeys. Mr Muddock, the well-known writer of books of travel, mentions that he has known several simians who were all habitual drunkards, and that his own monkey, 'Baba,' drank itself into delirium tremens. Their love of music is another trait that must not be passed over. They will keep time to fine music by swinging their bodies to and fro and nodding their heads; while, if discordant notes be struck, they will show the most extraordinary excitement, and chatter fiercely.

It is amusing to notice that, even with respect

to the habit of fainting, a weakness usually considered so peculiarly human, we are resembled by simians. Mrs Martin, in her entertaining work on South Africa, speaking of the apes of that region, draws the likeness with striking effect. 'Sarah,' an interesting young female baboon, was sometimes made the victim of rude practical jokes, one of which ended in the grotesque manner referred to. 'She dearly loved sweets,' says Mrs Martin, 'which were often given to her wrapped up in a multitude of papers, one inside the other. It was amusing to watch the patient and deliberate manner in which she would unfold each paper in turn, taking the greatest care never to tear one, and proceeding with all the caution of a good Mohammedan fearful of inadvertently injuring a portion of the Koran. This time, instead of the expected titbit, a dead night-adder was wrapped up and presented. When she unfolded the innermost paper, and the snake slipped out, with a horrid writhe, across her hand, Sarah quietly sank backwards and fainted away, her lips turning perfectly white. By dint of throwing water over her, chafing her hands, and bathing her lips with brandy, she was revived from her swoon, though not without some difficulty.' Truly an ape-like joke!

To a greater or lesser degree, most animals are able to express certain of their desires, feelings, and ideas, by various sounds and cries; but that this power approaches in simians to a kind of articulate speech was in 1892 set forth with much circumstantiality by Mr Garner. This gentleman subsequently went to study the ape language in the wilds of Africa, where, protected in a cage of patent construction, he professed to have been able, by means of phonographs, to acquire the original dialect in its native purity! But he seems not to have verified his claims by results.

Of the two gorillas 'Paul' and 'Virginia,' the Paris correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* remarks: 'It is impossible to look upon these strange caricatures of ourselves without being struck by the very slight structural difference which separates the two. When I entered the show, the young lady gorilla was munching an apple with every sign of satisfaction on her black face, which displayed at times a broad smile, just such as might be seen on many a human countenance of the same colour. Their shyness is very amusing, as they are not yet accustomed to being gazed at by hundreds of visitors. Virginia spends most of her time trying to conceal herself with wisps of straw, the result being that some of it sticks in her hair, giving her the appearance of a black Ophelia.'

The faculty of learning by imitation comes out in apes in a very human way. Dr Tylor mentions how the ape 'Mafuka,' of the Dresden Gardens, discovered the use of the key of her cage, which she would purloin, and hide under her arm; and how, on one occasion, seeing a carpenter at work using a bradawl, she seized the instrument and bored holes with it through the little table she had her meals on. 'The death of this ape,' says Dr Tylor, 'had an almost human pathos. When her friend the Director of the Gardens came to her, she put her arms round his neck, kissed him three

times, and then lay down on her bed, and giving him her hand, fell into her last sleep.'

The social instinct is largely developed amongst simians, and they will defend their friends and families with the greatest self-devotion. Indeed, in a number of particulars, the lives led by savages are not at all unlike those led by the anthropoids. Certainly the mental organisation of apes is inferior in many important respects to that of even the lowest races of men; but Professor Huxley states that the difference between the highest apes and men is not wider than between the highest and lowest among the anthropoids.

THE SANDS OF TIME.

I.

WHEN the leaves are whispering damp and dead
To the plash of the falling rain,
When the swallows have twittered good-bye and fled
Till Summer-time comes again,
Shall I think as I shut the old year out
Of what is to come in the new,
Or leave the future in shadow and doubt
To dream of the past with you?

II.

Do you remember an April day,
The sun on the springing corn,
And the trees a-tint with the promise of May,
Do you hear the far-off horn?
Last Summer's leaves crackled under our feet,
Or wind-tossed round us flew—
And now 'tis only in memory sweet
That I tread through the woods with you.

III.

Do you remember the hot July?
All nature gasped for breath,
While the faithless wind had forgotten to sigh,
And flower-birth led but to death.
We stood in the shade by the little gate,
Together, dear, I and you,
And we heard the blackbird call to his mate
When the roses cried out for the dew.

IV.

Do you remember a favourite horse,
A soft, warm nose in your hand?
The silence that came as a matter of course,
Or the speech that never was planned?
Do you remember—'tis months ago—
Or forget that you ever knew?
Dear, if I know as I think I know,
I know I am one with you.

V.

Do you remember the clear, cold night,
The night that our farewell sped?
You stood out dark 'gainst a streaming light,
'Take care of yourself!' you said.
All over. And yet though Summer be flown,
Its glories all lost to view,
I can never be heart-sick and never alone
When I travel the past with you.

B. M. DANBY.

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